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The Jewish Quarterly Review.

OCTOBER, 1892.

M. ISIDORE LOEB.

As most of the modern contributors to Jewish literature have had their training in Rabbinical schools, modern or old-fashioned, so the lamented M. Loeb also was a pupil in the seminary at Metz, and a colleague of the distinguished Rabbi Zadok Kahn, now Chief Rabbi of France. As far as we are aware, the earliest writings of M. Loeb consisted of sermons, and the French translation of a part of the *Mahazor*. These appeared between 1861 and 1869. Gradually he came forward with popular articles, rather literary in character than learned, on Jewish subjects, and these were published in the monthly *Univers Israélite*. Amongst these we find, also, biographical and bibliographical accounts, in the latter of which he showed, from the outset, great talent. The same class of literature he also provided in the *Revue Israélite* from 1870 to 1872. His great capacity for mediæval and modern Jewish history became known by his contributions to the *Archives Israélites*, and more especially to the *annuaires*. But the proofs of his true talents in the realm of learning, and his ardour for the study of Jewish literature, must be looked for in the *Revue des Etudes Juives*, of which he was not only the founder, but also the chief literary supporter. Indeed, in the first two years of the periodical, 1880 and 1881, his articles fill more than half the volumes. And what a

variety do we find there! The history of the Jews in France, north as well as south, that of the Jews in Spain, and criticism of Chronicles, in which his sagacity disclosed new facts. Jewish geography has its place also in this array, and many documents, French and Latin, have been unearthed by him, which throw light upon it. Thus his posthumous essay, which appeared in the last number of the *Revue*, brings together some important facts concerning the Chronicle of Judah ibn Verga.

From the Middle Ages, M. Loeb wandered to the Talmudic writings, with the help of which he explained the chain of Mishnaic tradition as found in the first chapter of the tractate *Aboth*, as well as the origin of the *Sh-moneh Esra*, or Eighteen Benedictions. Finally, in the last few years, M. Loeb, like Geiger and Graetz, turned his attention to the Bible, and wrote an extended essay on the literature "of the poor" in the Psalms, and the so-called Second Isaiah, though his treatment of the latter remained unfinished. The same is the case with his pamphlet entitled, *La vie des métaphores*, dedicated to M. J. Derenbourg on the occasion of the latter scholar's eightieth birthday in 1891. M. Loeb's articles in the *Revue* taken together would make several volumes, not to speak of his contributions to the *Revue des Religions*, 1888, on the religious controversy between Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages in France and in Spain, independently of a similar essay which appeared in the same year in the *Expositor*; in the *Israelitische Letterbode*, in Dr. Berliner's Magazine, and in other periodicals not mentioned above. Though M. Loeb never found the leisure to contribute to this Review, he felt a keen interest in it, and was always ready to serve the editors by active help and encouragement. Moreover, M. Loeb's reviews of books, and the yearly bibliographies which appeared in the *Revue* are not mere empty talk as is often the case, but they contain deep thoughts, excellent criticism and new suggestions.

Before we come to his labours contained in special books, we must mention that M. Loeb has contributed long articles

on Jewish statistics and early history to the *Dictionnaire Universel de Géographie* of M. Vivien de Saint Martin, 1884, as well as all the articles on early Jewish writers from A to C inclusive in the *Grande Encyclopédie*, now in course of publication. The detailed bibliography of all those contributions, as well as his books, will appear in the forthcoming number of the *Revue*, from the able pen of M. Israel Levi, and it will be preceded, as far as we are informed, by a life of M. Loeb, from the pen of his friend, the Grand Rabbin of France. The books published by M. Loeb are chiefly on the present state of the Jews in the Balkan States, Turkey, and Russia, which he was better acquainted with than anyone else, in consequence of filling the post of secretary of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, a post which he discharged for more than twenty years to the utmost satisfaction of everyone, and in which he was replaced with great difficulty.

We have seen that the deceased advanced the knowledge of the history and literature of the Jews in all branches of research, but we must not forget his astronomical labours in his work on the *Tables du calendrier juif depuis l'ère chrétienne jusqu'au XIX^e siècle* and his posthumous essay called *Les latitudes et longitudes des lieux dans les écrivains juifs*. We would also draw attention to two other essays which he left in a rough state: 1st, unedited documents on the history of the Jews in France, and more especially of Carpentras; 2nd, A history of the accusation of murder for ritual purposes, which latter we hope will be published as soon as possible, since this calumny has been revived lately at Xanten, in Germany, only ten years after the Tisza-Eslar affair in Hungary.

M. Loeb, besides his own arduous works and his lectures on the history of the Jews, delivered regularly as Professor in the Rabbinical seminary of Paris, stimulated others to follow him. In fact, he helped in translating articles from German *savants* for the *Revue* and encouraged by material assistance the publication of many books through funds

granted at his request by the *Alliance* as well by private individuals.

From our personal intercourse with the deceased for nearly twenty-five years we can say a word on his natural disposition. Above all he was a model of modesty; kind-hearted in every respect, serious with a certain worldly humour, which enhanced the charm of his society. Being a good linguist, he was able to communicate freely in French, German and Hebrew, while he had a good knowledge of English, and this command of languages contributed much to his great influence among the Jews in Russia and Poland as well as in all parts of the East. With all these excellent qualities it is no wonder that his premature death at the age of fifty-three years is bitterly felt in every Jewish heart. The *Alliance Israélite Universelle* as well as the *Revue des Etudes Juives* will do well to continue the tradition he has begun, and the works he has created or accomplished will thus survive for many a long year. אֵל נִצָּח וְחַי.

A. NEUBAUER.
